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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Baptists reflecting Christ at Olympics

BEIJING (BP) — After all the talk about pollution, Internet censoring, and human rights abuses, the 2008 Olympic Games are here.

The opening ceremony on Aug. 8 kicked off the first Olympics in China, and hundreds of thousands of foreigners will pour into Beijing for the 17-day event. Among them will be a number of Southern Baptists who will participate in a variety of ministry and outreach opportunities.

"Because it is a global event, you have the opportunity to touch the whole world all at once," said Jean Cullen, ministry consultant at the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). "In one minute you're speaking to one person from one country, and the next you're speaking to another person from another country. Your witness has a lot of bang for the buck."

Four teams of WMU volunteers will be serving in Beijing during the Summer Olympics, and will be involved in such activities as pin trading, festivals, and cultural exchanges. They will also be involved in prayer walking around the city.

Cullen said Olympic ministry is especially fitting for people who are outgoing and can easily engage others in conversation. "Usually people who are there to attend the Olympics are very open to talking. One of our hopes with this particular Olympics is that we'll have the opportunity to engage Chinese people."

Normally such ministry is no cause for concern at Olympic events, but this year could be different as religious freedom in China is much more limited than in previous host countries. "The volunteers have to be aware of what's acceptable in the country," Cullen said. "That's always an issue, but I would say there's more to it this year."

Other Baptist volunteers will be in Beijing as well, looking to engage people in conversation and talk to them about Jesus Christ, but on the ground in China isn't the only place where Olympic ministry is taking place. Some churches are finding ways to use the Olympics as a means of outreach in their own communities.

David Dykes, pastor of Green Acres Church in Tyler, Texas, is preaching a five-week sermon series in August titled, *Go for the Gold: How to be a Champion for God*.

"I'm going to actually highlight some of the unsung champions from the Bible," Dykes said. "Everybody knows about David and Goliath and Daniel in the lion's den." Dykes will use such biblical characters Benaiah, Ehud, and Michaiah, and will incorporate stories from the Olympics to give practical applications for how his listeners "can be a champion for God."

Green Acres Church held a 100-mile Carry the Light torch run throughout Tyler



OLYMPICS UNDERWAY — Beneath the Olympic torch, with fireworks in the sky, China opened the Summer Games on Aug. 8 with thousands of performers and intricate choreography and lighting. (BP photo by David McIntyre)

leading up to the Olympics. Hundreds of church members volunteered to carry a torch through different neighborhoods in Tyler, accompanied by others who prayed as they ran and walked through the city.

"I just think people are interested enough in the Olympics themselves," Dykes said. "I'm always looking for opportunities to involve people who wouldn't ordinarily come to church."

Dykes said his church is especially interested in the Olympics this year as they have had a partner city in China for the past five years. He's been to China himself 10 times in the last three years. "We're happy for the Chinese that they have [the Olympics], because it's a really big deal for them."

Other churches recently have returned from mission trips to China ahead of the Olympics. One Baptist church in southeast Texas (unnamed for security reasons) took a team of 15 in June. "We saw that it was kind of a once-in-a-lifetime ministry because of the Olympics coming up," the church's missions minister said. "We were using the Olympics as a draw for people."

The team members' ministry focused on meeting people in various parks around Beijing. "Once we met them and established a relationship with them, then we would slowly start to share when the opportunity became available," he said.

Another pastor, at a Baptist church in north Texas, also led a team to China in

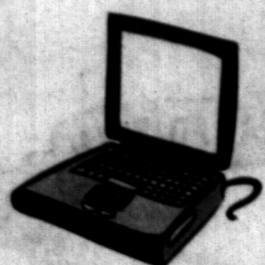
June. The Olympics were certainly a topic of conversation, he said.

The volunteers worked with some house church members in China, the pastor said. House churches in China are unregistered congregations that have refused to come under the oversight of the government-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Many house church leaders in China have faced intense persecution at the hands of the Chinese government.

The pastor was optimistic about the openness for Christians to talk to others about their beliefs during the Olympics. "If I was going to be there during the Olympics, I would feel a little more of a freedom of sharing my faith. The police are not going to be so much focusing on the Christians as they are other groups that may use the Olympics to undermine the government."

He encouraged other churches to consider short-term mission trips to China, as he said the Chinese people are increasingly open to the Gospel. "There is a real evidence of the growth of the Christian faith in China. Going over to China on short-term trips can really make an impact — the relationships that you develop and the opportunities you have to share the Gospel with the people who really are hungry. They're hungry for truth, and they really are hungry for God."

"I'll be involved in China, probably until I go to heaven, and I want to take as many of those people with me as I can."



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN
Benjamin Ivey
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Marcus Bowers, Brandon
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Send changes of address to: The
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
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Send news, communication, and
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BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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The next generation of believers

Kids have it tough finding their way in today's culture. Wait, maybe that statement applied to the generation before this one. Or maybe the generation before the generation before this generation. Or maybe it was the generation before the generation before the generation...

Well, you get the picture. It's a fact that each generation of young people has had its challenges, and the statement starting off this commentary applies to just about every generation. At some point in our youth, just about all of us had a hard time finding our way through the culture of our day.

However, it does seem the young people of today face a host of daunting challenges that would have terrified those of us of a previous generation. The glorification in our country of unbridled hedonism and

absolute materialism has reached heights unknown in human history (and that's saying a mouthful).

Their radios are filled with songs of lawlessness, racism, misogyny, nihilism, and violence of the vilest kinds. Their televisions nightly bring them thousands of graphic and uncensored images — sex of every imaginable perversion, alcoholic overindulgence, illegal drug use, disrespect for authority, and (again) the worst possible depictions of violence.

The Internet's contributions to this trend are too numerous to list.

Good kids are caricatured as unsophisticated and anti-intellectual. Good adults (especially Christian adults) and authority figures are pictured as scheming, diabolical, and not to be trusted. The pleasures of sin are depicted everywhere, but seldom are the consequences of those sins addressed.

Yes, it is tough for kids today, and that's why we need events like Mississippi Baptist Youth Night. They need to know we care.

Held each year in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, Youth Night is a standing-room-only event that has earned its longstanding title of the largest annual gathering of Mississippi Baptists anywhere in the state. It does a heart good to see that many young people flocking to one place for the sole purpose of worshipping God and his risen Son, Jesus Christ. We should be only too happy to accommodate them.

For 2008 Youth Night, Christian pop sensation Steven Fee provided worship while California pastor and youth speaker Francis Chan brought the message. As in years past,



Steven Fee



Francis Chan

scores of young people made their way down front at the end of the message to meet Christ.

"I don't believe we have ever had so much anticipation and excitement for an upcoming Youth Night," said Mike Brister, who headed up the event for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and serves as associate pastor/youth minister at First Church, Brookhaven. "We had probably 1,500 people lined up at the door waiting for an hour for us to open the doors."

"The passion in that room when the Fee Band led in their hit song, All Because Of Jesus, was just phenomenal. Then Francis delivered the Word of God in such a humble but clear approach. I left the Coliseum saying 'Thank you Lord for allowing me to be a part of such a great worship service to You, because it is truly all because of Jesus!'"

Let not your hearts be troubled, Mississippi Baptists. You're doing your part to raise up a new generation of believers, and in the midst of all the cultural white noise, it's working. Attend next year's Mississippi Baptist Youth Night and see for yourself.

Rower looks forward to Olympics, life in Christ

BEIJING (BP) — Jane Rumball may look like she's only rowing when she steps into the boat with her Canadian teammates to compete in the Beijing Olympics. She sits in the stroke seat of the women's eight event, setting the rhythm and pace that everyone behind her follows.

For Rumball, her sport involves much more than just the physical and mental exertion it demands. "I can't sing at all, but I can row," Rumball said. "That's my expression of worship. I'll be giving my best 'thank you' performance on the water on the biggest stage in the world."

Rumball has good reason for using rowing as a way to thank and worship God, because God used rowing to bring Rumball to faith in Jesus Christ.

She tried out for the University of Western Ontario's rowing team and made it, but she will forever remember the reactions of the two young women who did not. "One went off, kind of cursing the coach and the system, and saying it was completely unfair," Rumball recalled. The other girl, even though she went through the same process, seemed totally at peace with it. She was also very genuinely encouraging to everybody."

Laura Jackson's calm and dignified response to getting cut from the team left a permanent impression on Rumball. It also forced Rumball to ask a question for which she didn't have an answer: How could this girl be so happy and at peace when she's not even on the team?

Rumball walked out of the class one day and bumped into Jackson, who invited her to a dessert party/movie night for girls.



ON TO OLYMPICS — Canadian Olympic rower and pastor's wife Jane Rumball sharpens her skills in practice shortly before heading to Beijing for the 2008 Olympics. (BP photo by Jackie Skender/Rowing Canada)

Rumball accepted, and she remembers what she saw when she walked into the room that night. "It's like I walked into a whole roomful of Lauras," she said. "It was so unsettling to me."

What they had was salvation through Jesus Christ. Rumball asked God to save her. She met her husband Adam a few weeks later. He also had become a

Christian during his time at Western Ontario University and is now pastor of High Park Church in Toronto.

"Laura had such an impact on who I was, and obviously, she led me without even using words necessarily. She led me to understand that there's more to life than what you can put on your resume, whether it's sport or academic."

Chapmans talk of faith in daughter's death

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Two months after the tragic accident that claimed the life of his five-year-old daughter Maria Sue, Steven Curtis Chapman appeared with his wife and three oldest children on CNN's Larry King Live on Aug. 7 to testify to the solid hope believers have in Christ.

Chapman, a Grammy-winning Christian musician, said he deals with the loss of the youngest of his three adopted Chinese daughters "sometimes in intervals of about 15 minutes at a time."

One of the most pressing questions King wanted to ask was whether Chapman lost his faith at any point during the ordeal. "You know, at that moment, I've got to say, Larry, I mean it was — I was crying out to my — to my Father," Chapman said. "I was crying out to the guy that I know as my Heavenly Father."

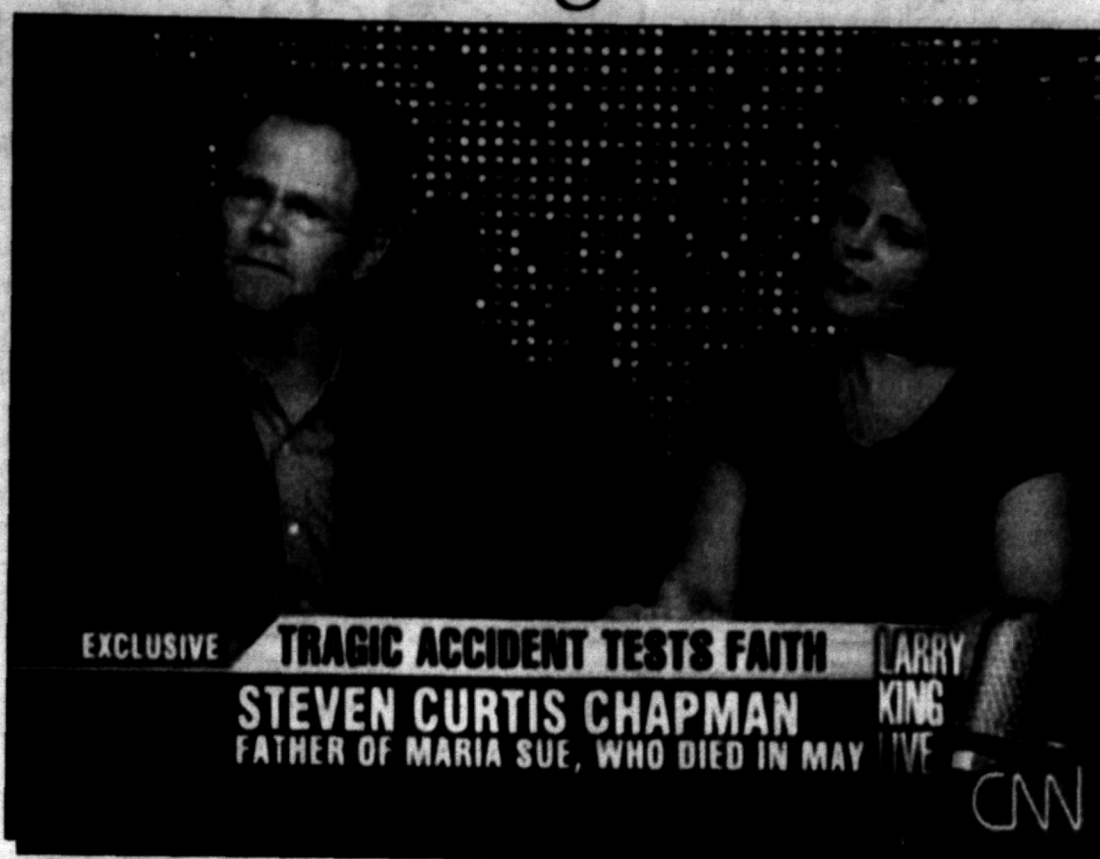
King wanted to know if Chapman was angry. "I really wasn't angry at God," he said, "and until you walk through that, I think I'm not sitting here saying, you know, 'I'm so — we're so strong and I made even a choice to do that.' It was just my immediate natural reaction was — I mean I know I heard myself saying a lot, 'God, You can't ask this of me. You can't ask this of my family. This is too much. We can't do this.'"

Chapman was standing on the front porch of his home in Franklin, Tenn., on May 21 when he saw his 17-year-old son Will

Franklin coming up the driveway in an old SUV. Chapman said he believes it was providential that God allowed him to see that Will was driving uncharacteristically slow and wasn't talking on his cell phone.

Will drove around to the back of the house, and as he was turning the corner, he didn't see his little sister run into his path. Immediately he knew he had hit something, and he stopped, only to find something that would forever change his life.

Chapman said his memory of the immediate aftermath is foggy. "I do remember running around to the back of the house and finding my wife, of course, just in hysterics," he said. "It was a lot of blood and I, you know, of course, began just, you know, reminding God of all the great things He had done through history and that He could, you know, give her life again. He could breathe life back into her."



REMEMBERING MARIA — Steven Curtis Chapman (left) and his wife Mary Beth discuss the loss of their five-year-old daughter Maria on CNN's Larry King Live on Aug. 7. The Chapmans had adopted Maria and two other girls from China. (BP photo courtesy of Cable News Network)

As they waited for medical personnel to arrive, Chapman and his wife performed CPR on Maria to no avail. The girl was flown by helicopter to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Will and the other children have been meeting with trauma counselors in order to work through their grief, their mother Mary Beth said while opening up about her own reaction to losing a child.

"I've been mad. I've been sad," she said. "I've jumped up and down. I've crawled under my bed. I've gone in my closet. You name it, I've done it, and I know that I will never understand, this side of eternity, why Maria, why Will. I have a list of questions in my journal, you know, 'Why?'"

The family agreed that they have never been angry at Will for the accident, and they re-

lied to show him their support. As Chapman was being driven to the hospital, he stopped in the yard to yell at his son, who was doubled over in agony, "Will Franklin, your father loves you."

Caleb told King that the night Maria died the family gathered around her body and made an oath that they would honor Maria by honoring the One who gave her to them.

"So the way I'm going to live my life from here on out is not be ashamed of what I've been created to do, and that's just share the Gospel, share Maria's story, and by sharing Maria's story, I get to share the hope that I found through tragedy," Caleb said.

Chapman has begun touring again, and he said the tragedy of losing Maria has given him more confidence as he sings. "I know a lot less about God, but the things I know about God, I know a whole lot more, for sure," he said.

Hamis follower converts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The son of a prominent leader in the Hamas terrorist organization has publicly declared his faith in Jesus Christ and warned that Israel can never be at peace with the "wicked and cruel" men who lead Hamas. Masab Yousef, who now prefers to be known as Joseph, is the oldest son of Sheikh Hassan Yousef, a political leader of the Hamas organization in the West Bank and one of the movement's most popular public figures. He gave his life to Christ in 2004, four years after a friend invited him to a Bible study and he began to read the Christian Scriptures for himself. His father, who is not involved with the military arm of Hamas, is a moderate who does not support the use of terror to further the cause of a Palestinian state. When he was arrested by the Israel Defense Force in 1996 at age 18 for being the head of a Hamas youth organization, Yousef was incarcerated at Megiddo Prison, where he had an opportunity to see that most Hamas leaders were not peaceful men like his father. Yousef said the extremists' deception extends to their representation of Islam itself. "The people who supposedly represent the religion admired Mohammed more than God, killed innocent people in the name of Islam, beat their wives and don't have any idea what God is," he told Haaretz. "I have no doubt that they'll go to hell. I have a message for them: There is only one way to Paradise — the way of Jesus who sacrificed Himself on the cross for all of us." Israelis and their friends should not be deceived into thinking that peace with Hamas is possible, Yousef said. "You will never, but never have peace with Hamas. Islam, as the ideology that guides them, will not allow them to achieve a peace agreement with the Jews," he told Haaretz. "They believe that tradition says that the Prophet Mohammed fought against the Jews and that therefore they must continue to fight them to the death. They have to take revenge against anyone who did not agree to accept the Prophet Mohammed."

Looking back

10 years ago

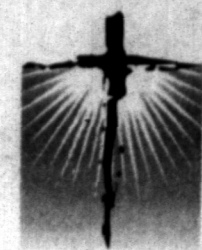
Mississippi leads the Southern Baptist Convention in Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gifts in per capita giving, dollar increase over 1996, and percentage increase over 1996 — and came in just behind Texas in total dollars given.

20 years ago

In what may be the largest religious printing order ever, the Holman division of the Baptist Sunday School Board contracts for the printing of up to 15 million New Testaments for the "Here's Hope — God cares for you" evangelistic effort planned for 1989-90.

50 years ago

Mississippi Baptists, through the Mississippi Baptist Convention, maintain and operate the state's largest private hospital, the Mississippi Baptist Hospital in Jackson, a 400-bed facility with a replacement value of \$10 million.



MISSISSIPPI
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THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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AUGUST 14, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 32



YOU CAN RESPOND
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Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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YWBE DHBPNH IH
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DHBPNHO EV IVX:
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WHBN PWBGG DVNH
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DBNM RVXN: EYHCEI-
RVXN

Clue: S = 1

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Five Thirty-Nine

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IN THE HINGES OF LIFE

I was taking a tour of an old home, a southern antebellum home. The house was built somewhere over 150 years ago. Walking into the main entryway, we opened and passed through a huge door. It seemed to me that it was probably four or five times larger than any door that might be in a modern home. It was wider than and probably twice as tall if not more as the average door. I just happened to notice the hinges. Three of them were attached to the wall and to this massive piece of wood. In comparison to the massive door, they were very small hinges but it was on those three pieces of metal that everything moved. The door opened, closed, and operated because of the hinges. It could be said that in a real sense everything that happened in that house whether it was welcoming guests or ushering folks out depended upon those hinges.

I noticed that the hinges on that massive door looked much like and operated the same way that hinges do on doors today. While 150-plus years have passed, very little advancement has been made or changes taken place in hinges. In spite of the fact that during that time the airplane was invented and radios, televisions, telephones, cell phones, and computers have all come into existence, man has gone to the moon and back, yet hinges have stayed about the same.

They are everywhere. We cannot go anywhere, do anything, or enjoy life without hinges. As I looked at those small metal hinges swinging that massive wooden door, I thought about how life seems to move on hinges. The doors seem to open or close and the massive movements of life seem to be attached to certain hinges. There are times when you think that you are coming up on one of the great, life-transforming, huge moments in life only to find out that it was really not as significant as you thought it would be — while at other times, something happened in a spontaneous, serendipitous way and it became a transformational hinge moment in your life. Life is filled with hinges that open and close, to welcome you in and allow you to escape.

I thought about one of those hinge moments in life like when I first got my drivers license. It was a fantastic, earthshaking, swing-the-door-wide-open moments. I could go anywhere that I got ready to go. It turned out to be anything but an earthshaking, do-what-you-want-to-do kind of moment. Why? Because when I got my license it did not take long before I realized that I did not have a car, could not afford one, could not pay the insurance on it if I had one, could not put the gas in it, or keep up the maintenance on it if I had one. It was a big deal and it was a big day, but not near as big as I

thought it was going to be. It was several years later before I had saved up my money, bought a car, paid for my insurance, and began to pay the gas and tire bill on a 1950 Dodge Deluxe. I paid for it myself and then began to pay for insurance and try to keep gas in the tank. Even then, there were restrictions on the car that I bought and paid for with my own money. My Mom and Dad told me when I could go and where I could go.

By contrast, there are moments, events, and even decisions that you have not given much thought to and all of a sudden it happens and you are left with life swinging open and shut in a moment of time in ways that you never dreamed could happen. Those are moments like death, the consequences of a

dumb decision, or the blessings that come from the decisions that you spent little time thinking about but reaped rewards of joy from for years to come.

Now all of this discussion about the hinges of life brought me to this point in my thought process. I pray that God will allow me to be used by Him in the lives of others around the hinges of life moments. There is something about the needs in the lives of people that the hinge moments cannot be repeated, duplicated, or even ignored. Through the years, God has blessed me in allowing me to be

around and to be a part of individuals and families at the hinge moments of service. A door may open and close a thousand times and barely be significant, but there are occasions when the door swings open and life is never the same again.

I pray that for you and for me that God would give us a sensitivity to watch for and to be near to folks to care about them, to minister to them, and to help them in the hinges of life moments. Maybe you know of someone and things have swung in their life in recent days and you can care and minister to them in the redeeming love of Jesus. Possibly it involves a death, divorce, addiction, the pain of a broken relationship, the disappointment of a child gone astray, or the disillusionment of a parent who has taken a wrong turn. Watch for the hinges of life and be ready to help.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

MS POSITIONS

WANTED: PINEVIEW BAPTIST Church, Clinton, Miss., is seeking individual for part-time interim minister of music or part-time minister of music for blended Worship service. Please send resume to Pineview Baptist Church, 1288 Clinton-Raymond Road, Clinton, MS 39056 or email to Pineviewbc@bellsouth.net. You can fax your resume to 601-924-8378.

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, Greenville, Miss., accepting resumes for a minister of childhood education. This minister will lead an ongoing ministry to children from birth through 6th grade. Send resumes to ryoung@ebcgreenville.com. Or mail to Emmanuel Baptist Church, 3600 Glendale Rd., Greenville, MS 38703. Or call 662-335-3296.

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THE WAY COMMUNITY CHURCH, Louisville, Miss., accepting resumes for a bi-vocational pastor. Please mail resumes to Tim Burt, 1247 Sims Rd., Louisville, MS 39339. Or call 662-803-9574 for additional information.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SOUGHT FOR interdenominational evangelical scholarship ministry, Educating Africans for Christ. Requires management and fundraising experience, public speaking abilities, some required travel to Africa. Send resume/statement of faith to exec@eafc.net or Box 5303, Jackson, MS 39296-5303.

Baptists providing assistance during Dem convention

DENVER (BP) — When the Democratic National Convention meets at Denver's Pepsi Center Aug. 25-28, the "Mile High City" will absorb an estimated 225,000 visitors, including the 5,000 credentialed delegates, politicians, the news media, and protesters. Local officials are readying for the challenge.

As a ministry to Denver's law enforcement officers and first responders such as emergency medical service personnel and firefighters, three local Southern Baptist congregations and the Mile High Association have initiated a Love Denver outreach.

Five hundred or more Baptist volunteers will join in the effort, and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) is coming alongside the outreach with funding assistance.

Denver's Baptist Church, Bear Valley Church, First Southern Baptist Westminster Church, and the association have been planning the Love Denver ministry for 10 months.

The outreach will provide law enforcement personnel and first responders with hot meals, sandwiches, snacks, bottled water, and other drinks during the four-day convention as well as the days leading up to and after the Democratic gathering.

Jim Shaddix, pastor of Riverside Church in downtown Denver, noted, "We hope the outcome will be a lot of public servants in the city of Denver seeing Baptists' desire to be servants and reflecting the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire is to minister to the law enforcement personnel and first responders, saying to them, 'We care about you, love you, and want to be here for you.'"

With the Democratic convention coming to town, Shaddix said the church felt that an outreach was more than an option: "We felt it was one of those assignments from the Lord."

"Riverside, Bear Valley and the association wanted to come up with a ministry to support law enforcement in Denver long after the dust of the Democratic convention has cleared," added Bob Ryan, team leader with the Mile High Association.

Ryan said Southern Baptists, in partnership with the city of Denver and the federal government, will prepare and serve 7,600 meals a day from Aug. 23-29. Logistics include an order for 135,000 bottles of water that will be distributed.

Hot meals will be served each day between 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 11 p.m.-2 a.m. in 19 different "zones" throughout the downtown area. Most of the zones will be based in downtown hotel conference rooms, where officers can eat or take a snack break during their shift or when their shift is over.

The facilities will be open around the clock for personnel who won't be able to leave the downtown area while on duty.

In addition to food and refreshments for the city's police officers and first responders, Southern Baptist chaplains will be available in each zone. Ryan said it will take 76 chaplains a day, each working six-hour shifts at each of the 19 sites.

"In all, we'll have 500-700 volunteers working at the 19 locations during the convention," Ryan said. "I'd feel more comfortable with 1,000. We'll just have to be more intense with less."

Ryan said hot food preparation will be handled by volunteers using the commercial-style kitchen at Riverside Church, located near INVESCO Field at Mile High as well as an Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief feeding unit stationed at the Mile High Association office. Each kitchen facility will prepare 1,600 meals every 12 hours.

On Thursday night of the convention, presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama is scheduled to



MAKING PLANS — At the Pepsi Center, site of the upcoming Democratic National Convention, two Denver police officers involved in logistical planning, Lt. Tim Rusk and Capt. Sylvia Sich, visit with three pastors at the forefront of Baptists' Love Denver project to help first responders during an influx of some 225,000 to the city. From left are Jim Walters of Bear Valley Church, Jim Shaddix of Riverside Church and Dan Dellinger of First Southern Baptist Westminster Church.

give his acceptance speech outside before a crowd of 77,000 at INVESCO Field, which will greatly stretch law enforcement personnel handling security and traffic in downtown Denver.

Ryan said the Love Denver ministry project still needs volunteers. Those interested in volunteering, particularly those qualified for chaplaincy ministry and drivers with commercial licenses, can go to www.saturate-colorado.com to sign up.

"Southern Baptists everywhere need to know that they're playing a part in this effort," Ryan said. "NAMB contributed \$60,000 toward the project's overall budget of \$284,000. Every Baptist is participating because of their gifts to the Cooperative Program."

For additional information on Love Denver, call the Mile High Association at (303) 433-9100 or e-mail mhbaoffice@mile-highbaptist.org.

Proposed Dem platform to include strong homosexual slant

PITTSBURGH (BP) — In a major victory for homosexual activists, the 2008 proposed Democratic Party Platform goes on record as opposing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), a law passed in 1996 that gives states protections from being forced to legalize homosexual marriage.

The platform also for the first time calls for overturning the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, which prevents homosexuals from serving openly. Additionally, it repeats the party's support for the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide during all nine months of pregnancy.

Signed into law by former President Clinton, DOMA Act has two parts. First, it prevents the federal government from recognizing homosexual marriages even the state level, such as in Massachusetts and California. Second, it gives states the option of not recognizing homosexual marriages from other states.

The proposed platform was approved Aug. 9 by the Democratic Party platform committee and now must be ratified by delegates at the Democratic National Convention later this month.

The platform language reflects the views of presumptive Democratic nominee Barack Obama, who supports DOMA's repeal. Ironically, Obama has repeatedly called for DOMA's repeal while at the same time on his website saying the "federal government should not stand in the way of states that want to decide on their own how best to pursue equality for gay and lesbian couples."

Such statements have frustrated conservatives, who note that DOMA was passed to give states more leeway on the issue. Repealing DOMA, they say, could force states to recognize homosexual marriages from Massachusetts and California.

Carrie Gordon Earll of Focus on the Family Action said Obama is "talking out of both sides of his mouth."

"[Repealing DOMA] would remove the ability of a state to say, 'We don't want to recognize so-called same-sex marriages from other states,'" Earll told Baptist Press. "So, while [Obama] will say he does not go as far as supporting same-sex marriage, he is willing to repeal the law that protects states from having to accept same-sex marriage."

Obama also opposes proposed constitutional marriage amendments in California, Arizona, and Florida. He has gone significantly further in his support of homosexual rights than did 2004 Democratic nominee John Kerry, who backed a marriage amendment in his home state of Massachusetts and also said he didn't favor repealing DOMA.

Earlier this year Obama wrote the Alice B. Toklas Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Democratic Club and said, "I am proud to join with and support the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community in an effort to set our nation on a course that recognizes LGBT Americans with full equality under the law."

Obama's positions also have drawn a sharp distinction with presumptive Republican nominee John McCain, who backs DOMA and Don't Ask, Don't Tell and also supports the various state marriage amendments.

Obama has made promises to the homosexual community while at the same time courting the votes of evangelicals.

"At some point he's going to have to choose," Earll said. "He can try to court homosexual activists and evangelicals simultaneously, but if he does what he has promised homosexual activists, it will be the evan-

gelicals and religious freedom that will suffer."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from San Francisco who supports homosexual marriage, said recently at a press conference that she would support Obama's efforts to repeal DOMA if he is elected president.

It's unknown how successful an effort to repeal DOMA would be, although its chances would be far greater if Democrats maintain the House and Senate. When DOMA passed the Senate 85-14 in 1996, Democratic Sen. Harry Reid — now the majority leader — supported it.

Past calls for repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell have drawn criticism from those who have served in the military. Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council and a former U.S. Marine, told Baptist Press last year he believes the policy makes common, practical sense.

"Sometimes you'll have 100, 500, or 1,000 soldiers, sailors or Marines together in a barracks or in a ship bay, all using the same showers and bathroom facilities," Perkins said. "When you introduce sexuality into that kind of environment, it begins to break down discipline and unit cohesion."

Southern Baptists in 1993 passed a resolution opposing "lifting the ban on homosexuals serving in the armed forces." They also passed resolutions opposing homosexual marriage in 1996, 2003, and 2008, with the 2003 resolution implicitly stating support for the Defense of Marriage Act and the 2008 resolution calling on California Southern Baptists and Christians to "exercise their civic and moral duty by working diligently to support and voting to pass" the proposed marriage amendment.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



4. Iuka Church



5. Salem Church



6. Unity Church



7. Ramage and Hunt

1. **Wyatte Church, Senatobia**, is hosting a women's event with Kay DeKalb Smith, speaker, Sept. 6, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. \$12/person. Pre-register at (662) 562-6587 or 560-0546.

2. **Team Impact** will be at **First Church, Gautier**, Aug. 15 - 17, 7 p.m. nightly and 10:30 a.m. Aug. 17. Free Admission.

3. Christian encourager **Liz Curtis Higgs** will be featured at a women's event Aug. 16 at **Temple Church, Hattiesburg's**, west campus, 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25; lunch included. Call (601) 450-3900 for tickets and information.

4. **Iuka Church, Iuka**, went to **Belmopan, Belize** May 24 - 31 on a mission trip on behalf of **Global Outreach**. The group held VBS, evangelism, and construction. Shown are the participants.

5. **Salem Church, Raleigh**, held a baby dedication service July 13. Shown, from left, are Hope Eason with Eli, Ricky and Kim Ivy with Daelyn, and Ricky and Angie Baldwin with Thaila.

6. **The Children's Church of Unity Church, Moselle** held a books of the Bible-a-thon and received pledges and donations for reciting the 66 books of the Bible. Proceeds raised went toward the building fund at Unity.

7. **Sandhill Church, West**, honored director of the Ladies of the Church **Jessie Ramage** recently with a plaque and a rose from the church. Shown are Ramage and pastor **Ralph Hunt**.

8. The RAs of **Hillsboro Church, Hillsboro**, attended camp at **Central Hills** July 14 - 18. Shown are **Dustin Mitchell, Blake Fortenberry, Casey Robinson, Trey Rushing, and Trenton Evers**.

9. A group of 13 from several churches and **New Orleans Seminary** went to **Bolivia** on a mission trip recently with **Gordon Crocker**, pastor, **Friendship Church, Lincoln County**. Shown are the participants.

10. **Cross Roads Church, Biloxi**, broke ground on their parsonage July 27. Shown are **Bill Warren, Tommy Thompson, Ola Powell, Vicki Hudson, Theo Goodwin, Sr., Theo Goodwin, Jr., Bill Powell and Justin Franklin**.

11. **Corinth Church, Kemper County**, recently ordained **Dennis Robinson** to the ministry. Shown are pastor **Robert Higginbotham and Robinson**.



8. Hillsboro RAs



9. Bolivia mission team



10. Groundbreaking, Cross Roads Church



11. Higginbotham and Robinson